

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-17 and 29-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,563,513 (Reynolds, et al.); and the remaining claims, 18-28, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Reynolds, et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,515,680 (Hendricks, et al.).

Independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 are being amended to better define the subject matters of these claims.

For the reasons discussed below, Claims 1-34 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. The Examiner is, thus, requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-17 and 29-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102 and the rejection of Claims 18-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103, and to allow Claims 1-34.

The present invention, generally, relates to methods and systems for monitoring or representing various aspects of video-on-demand (VOD) services. In a first aspect of the invention, a tree representation, including branches and nodes, is used to represent and monitor aspects of the VOD services. More specifically, this aspect of the invention is used for providing multilevel information about the VOD services. A display of a tree having a plurality of nodes is generated, and information about video-on-demand services is embedded in those nodes. For instance, the nodes may contain information about the equipment used to provide the VOD, the users, or the VOD programs themselves.

In a second aspect of the invention, a matrix is established from first and second catalogs of elements of a VOD system, and connection representations are formed for at least

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some of the cells of the matrix. These connection representations may be used to represent a wide range of relationships, such as relationships between users and presentations, or between the VOD equipment.

Reynolds, et al. discloses a television program guide that supports a video window function that may be used when browsing for available television programs. A viewer may use the program guide to display a window that contains video for a program currently being broadcast on another channel or a video clip of a program to be shown sometime in the future. The viewer may learn about available programming by browsing through channels on the program guide. Columns 11 and 12 of Reynolds, et al. describes a browser feature for programming that may be available on demand.

There is a very important general difference between the present invention and the video on demand browse feature described in Reynolds, et al. The present invention is directed more to representing graphically relationships between various elements of a video on demand system, while Reynolds, et al. is directed, more simply, to providing information about specific programming available on a video on demand system.

This general difference between the present invention and Reynolds, et al. is reflected in a number of more specific differences. For example, in the above-described first aspect of the invention, the displayed tree includes nodes and branches that interconnect the nodes to represent relationships between the nodes and the information embedded therein. Also, in the second aspect of the invention, the matrix cells, or the formed connection representations for the matrix cells, represent relationships between the elements of the catalogs that form the matrix cells.

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Independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 clearly describe differences between the claims and the prior art. In particular, Claims 1, 6, 11 and 29 describe the displayed tree as having a plurality of nodes and branches representing relationships between the nodes. Also, Claims 18 and 25 describe the feature that each matrix cell, or connection representation of a matrix cell, represents a relationship between a pair of the catalog elements that form the matrix cell.

It is this display or use of matrix cells that represent relationship between a pairs of elements of a video on demand system that is not taught or suggested by Reynolds, et al. Nor is this feature taught by Hendricks, et al.

Hendricks, et al. was cited for its disclosure of a menu driven system. Here too there is no disclosure or suggestion of forming a matrix of VOD elements and using each cell of the matrix to indicate a relationship between the elements of the VOD system that form the cell.

The above-discussed features of this invention are useful because they may be used to display graphically various relationships between elements of the VOD system. For example, they may be used to show which users are watching which programs, or which servers are being used to supply video to which users.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other reference, whether they are considered individually or in combination, also fail to disclose or suggest the above-discussed features of the present invention, as claimed in Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29.

Because of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 and the prior art, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, these claims patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 2-5 and 34 are dependent

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from Claim 1 and are allowable therewith; Claims 7-10 are dependent from Claim 6 and are allowable therewith; and Claims 12-16 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 11. Similarly, Claims 19-23 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 18; Claims 26-28 are dependent from Claim 25 and are allowable therewith; and Claim 30 is dependent from, and is allowable with, Claim 29. Also, Claims 17, 24 and 31 incorporate by reference, and are allowable with, Claims 1, 18 and 30 respectively. Claims 31-33 are dependent from Claim 30 and are allowable therewith.

The Examiner is, accordingly, respectfully requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-17 and 29-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102 and the rejection of Claims 18-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103, and to allow Claims 1-34.

Every effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance, a notice of which is requested. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is asked to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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